

# How to Buy Fresh, Organic Food. And Why You Should.



By [Pete Kennedy, Esq.](#) | [The Defender](#)

With the accelerating deterioration in quality and reliability of the conventional food supply, one of the best steps anyone can take for health and preparedness is to increase purchases of food produced by regenerative farmers and small-scale artisans.

What follows is a summary of resources to help you find fresh food.

Any search should start with the Weston A. Price Foundation ([WAPF](#)). WAPF is an international membership 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to restoring [nutrient-dense](#) foods to the American diet through education, research, and activism.

The foundation operates on a system of local chapters – there are around 320 chapters in the U.S. and close to another 75 internationally. It is the primary responsibility of each chapter leader to locate sources of real food for both WAPF members and non-members who ask.

To find a WAPF chapter near you, go [here](#).

Every December, WAPF also publishes its [Shopping Guide](#), a comprehensive listing of sources for 30 food categories, including meat, dairy, poultry, ferments, and other nutritious foods. (Members receive the guide for free; non-members can purchase the guide for \$3.)

With “Best,” “Good” and “Avoid” rankings, the guide strives to identify the healthiest foods consumers can purchase in health food stores, supermarkets, and farms, including foods that can be ordered by phone or online.

## **1. Websites to locate regenerative farms**

For those who don't live near a WAPF chapter or who live in a food desert with few (if any) local sources of nutrient-dense foods, here are websites listing regenerative farmers that include those who ship their products:

- [EatWild.com](#) – Founded in 2001 to promote the benefits of eating meat, eggs, and dairy products from “100% grass-fed animals or other non-ruminant animals being fed their natural diets,” EatWild features a state-by-state-plus-Canada [directory](#) of local farmers who sell pasture-raised products direct to consumers. The website's directory currently lists more than 1,400 pasture-based farms.
- [LocalHarvest.org](#) – Local Harvest's website has a directory listing “over 40,000 family farms and farmers markets along with restaurants and grocery stores that feature local food.” Local Harvest has listings for local farms, community-supported agriculture (CSA)

programs, farmers markets, restaurants, groceries, pick-your-own produce, and farm stands.

- [FarmMatch.com](http://FarmMatch.com) – The FarmMatch site connects consumers looking for nutrient-dense food with local farmers and buyers clubs selling food from local farms. Many of the producers on FarmMatch will also ship their products.
- [RealMilk.com](http://RealMilk.com) – This is the website for A Campaign for Real Milk, a project of the WAPF to establish universal access to raw milk. All farmers and food buyers clubs listed on the site provide raw dairy products – many also sell meat, poultry, eggs, produce, and other foods. WAPF has both a national and international directory of producers. For an interactive map, go [here](#).
- [AzureStandard.com](http://AzureStandard.com) – Azure Standard markets the products of thousands of farmers and local businesses by providing a one-stop shop for people who have trouble finding organic, naturally produced foods locally. Azure delivers to drop points around most of the country and ships everywhere in the U.S. Go to [azurestandard.com](http://azurestandard.com) for more information.
- [PolyfaceFarms.com](http://PolyfaceFarms.com) – One farm that needs no help to successfully market its products is the world-famous Salatin family farm, Polyface Farm, located in southwest Virginia – the farm ships beef, pork, poultry, and other nutrient-dense foods across the country to customers ordering through [polyfaceyum.com](http://polyfaceyum.com).

## **2. Listings by certification organizations**

For those interested in getting verification of standards that farmers adopt in raising livestock or growing produce, there are a number of certification organizations providing those services.

Consumers looking for grass-fed meat and dairy from grass-fed animals can go to [AmericanGrassfed.org](http://AmericanGrassfed.org), the website of the American Grassfed Association (AGA). For a list of AGA-certified farms, go [here](#). AGA certifies farms as “grass-fed”

if the animals on the farm are:

- Only fed grass and forage from weaning until harvest.
- Never treated with antibiotics or added growth hormones.
- Raised on pasture without confinement.
- Born and raised on American family farms.

The influence of industrial agriculture has diluted the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) organic standards, especially for foods like dairy where giant confined animal feeding operations ([CAFOs](#)) – whose cows rarely or ever are out on pasture – nevertheless obtain USDA organic certification.

The [RealOrganicProject.org](#) (ROP) was formed to add on requirements to the current USDA standards to restore the term “organic” to its original intent. ROP has certified 850 “real organic” farmers. To view the list, go [here](#).

Other certification organizations with listings for sources of wholesome foods include:

- [AGreenerWorld.org](#), which has listings for a variety of certifications with a [directory](#) page by “types of outlets” and product categories.
- [CertifiedHumane.org](#), which has a [listing](#) of retailers and producers of specific foods produced through humane farming practices.
- [Certified.NaturallyGrown.org](#), which has a [listing](#) by state of producers that avoid GMO (genetically modified organism) feeds and “any synthetic fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides” as inputs for their operations.

Types of operations include producing, livestock, harvesting mushrooms, aquaponics, and honey beekeeping. CNG also publishes the [Guide to Exceptional Markets](#) to promote “food co-ops, grocers, and farmers markets” featuring CNG producers.

### **3. More local connections**

- **Edible Communities:** Another network identifying sources of fresh food in over 90 cities via “independently owned, locally focused publications” is [EdibleCommunities.com](http://EdibleCommunities.com), which features stories on local farmers and food artisans. Restaurants and farmers’ markets are among the venues distributing free copies of Edible Communities magazines. Go [here](#) to see if a city you live in or near has an Edible.
- **Intentional communities:** An “intentional community” is [defined](#) as “a small, localized community of persons or families presuming common interests or values, and usually sharing responsibilities.” The website [ic.org](http://ic.org) lists over 1,100 intentional communities with farms in the U.S. and internationally.

Most of these communities allow visitors – a number of them such as Cobb Hill Farm in Hartland, Vermont, have a farm store where consumers can purchase nutritious produce, meat, dairy, and other foods.

- **Community-Supported Agriculture:** Consumers can lock in a supply of farm-fresh food by subscribing to CSA programs. CSAs have been defined as a production and marketing model whereby consumers buy shares of a farm’s harvest in advance.

The CSA model is mostly used for production, but some CSAs offer meat, poultry products, eggs or other foods, or some combination of products and these other items. Under a produce CSA, subscribers prepay for a growing season to receive weekly distributions of produce – meat CSAs are often for a 6-month period, with winter and summer seasons for distribution to subscribers.

There are also multi-farm CSAs. This business model helps farms by improving their cash flow and by having consumers share in the risk of anything going wrong with the harvest. The subscriber isn’t guaranteed a specific amount of food,



only that the share will be in proportion to the subscriber's membership interest in the harvest. You can find a list of CSAs in your area on the [Local Harvest](#) website.

- **Farmers markets and farm stores:** Aside from going to the farm, there are a number of other local venues where consumers can obtain farm foods as well as foods from local artisans, notably farmers' markets. A good farmers market will have a broad array of producers selling quality meat, poultry, dairy, produce, ferments, and baked goods, among other foods.

Farmers markets are booming in many areas of the country, and the [National Farmers Market Directory](#) maintains a U.S. listing [online](#) by state. State farmers' market associations, state departments of agriculture websites, and your local agricultural extension agents are other sources of information about farmers' markets.

For farmers who don't have the time or inclination to set up at a farmers market, a farm store variation is increasingly taking root. In Ann Arbor, Michigan, for example, local farmers and artisans stock the store shelves at the [Argus Farm Stop](#) themselves and receive 75% of the sale proceeds. The owners at Argus have trained others around the country in adopting this promising model to increase small-farm revenues and access to quality locally produced food in what amounts to a year-round, all-day farmers market.

**Food Cooperatives:** Another venue where consumers can find farm-fresh products are [food cooperatives](#): "A food co-op is essentially a grocery store that's owned by the people that shop there. Members get to decide what foods and products are stocked on the shelves, where those items are purchased, and what quality standards both products and vendors have to meet."

A national list of food co-ops is maintained by

[CoopDirectory.org](http://CoopDirectory.org). Before joining a co-op, do your due diligence to find out how much emphasis the co-op places on purchasing food from local farmers and artisans.

- **Buyers Clubs:** Food buyers clubs distributing food directly from the farm usually have a less formal operation than food co-ops. Instead of a brick-and-mortar business where members own stock in the co-op, buyers clubs often work out of members' houses and the members pay an annual fee to belong to the club. If you live near a [Weston Price Chapter](#), ask your chapter leader if there are any food buyers clubs in your area.
- **Food Hubs:** A final venue, for the purposes of this story, is the food hub. The USDA defines a "[food hub](#)" as "a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional food producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail and institutional demand."

Food hubs increase access and convenience for consumers wanting fresh food. There are currently around 300 food hubs in the U.S. A link to the USDA [Food Hub Directory](#) is posted at [www.usdalocalfooddirectories.com](http://www.usdalocalfooddirectories.com).

#### 4. Quality matters

The healthiest, highest quality food is generally found on the farm. The industrial-food-stocked supermarket, a post-World War II phenomenon, has contributed to the deterioration of the American people's health.

With [industrial food](#) and the [pharmaceutical industry](#) increasingly joined at the hip, the decline is only accelerating. Increasing purchases from small farmers and local artisans are the path to better health and stronger communities.

Anyone with questions about finding sources of fresh food can

email [foodseries@solari.com](mailto:foodseries@solari.com).

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*The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Children's Health Defense.*



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